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ABSTRACT

It has long been recognized that organizations that provide education, health and other services to children and families do not work together easily, although coordination is recognized as desirable. This exploration of facilitation strategies in service coordination draws upon the study by the Center on Education in the Inner Cities of projects in Houston (Texas), Chicago (Illinois), East Los Angeles (California), and Minneapolis (Minnesota). The new perspective on how much institutions matter, characterized as the "New Institutionalism," suggests that there are two key insights to consider in exploring the institutional side of service coordination. The first is that institutions under environmental pressure tend to protect their "core" technologies, and may tend to become more fragmented under pressure to change. The second insight is that deeply embedded routines, rules, and scripts are those most likely to result in eventual collaboration if they are taken into account by nurturing collaboration from within. Efforts to promote collaboration requires a better understanding of the kinds of technical assistance needed. (Contains 44 references.) (SLD)

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Achieving Coordinated School-Linked Services: Facilitating Utilization of the Emerging Knowledge Base

by R. L. Crowson & W. L. Boyd

The National Center on Education in the Inner Cities

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This paper was prepared for the Invitational Conference on "Improving Urban Schools: Better Strategies for the Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge," sponsored by the National Center on Education in the Inner Cities, Alexandria, VA, September 8-10, 1994.

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Achieving Coordinated, School-Linked Services: Facilitating Utilization of the Emerging Knowledge Base

Robert L. Crowson and William L. Boyd

Introduction

Few reforms have captured the imagination and excitement that surrounds the notion of coordinated services for children. Over the past few years an impressive array of foundations, governments (at all levels), entrepreneurs, universities, community organizations, corporations, and interested individuals have joined in service-integration experimentation. From the "street" level of service delivery to state- and federal-level coordination, attempts are underway nationwide to change a fragmented system of services for children into more effective sets of partnerships.

The education, health, and other-services needs of children and families are highly interrelated, thus (it is argued) programs of assistance should certainly find a way to work much more closely, more productively together. From the beginning, however, it has been recognized that service organizations do not partner very easily. Their professionals are trained, certified, and rewarded for autonomy; their budgetary and resource allocation structures discourage any hint of "comingling;" their information systems protect a specialized sense of service and clientele; and their service-authorizing foundations (e.g., state

statutes) tend to be tightly woven around independent systems of accountability (see Adler and Gardner, 1994).

It is not difficult, therefore, to appreciate the attention, from the outset, that has been devoted to the preparation of handbooks, manuals, and guidelines for those who would have the temerity to give service coordination a try. Some of the most widely read of these are: Together We Can (1993) by Atelia Melaville and Martin Blank, with Gelareh Asayesh; What It Takes (1991) by Atelia Melaville with Martin Blank; Thinking Collaboratively (1991) by Charles Bruner; and At-Risk Youth in Crisis (1991), published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Although to some degree the guidelines in these handbooks have preceeded the development of a rich knowledge base, gleaned from the results of ongoing projects, the handbooks are nevertheless well thought-through and informatively/practically significant. Their authors are neither naive nor uninformed about the extremely tough issues involved in changing service-delivery systems.

Beyond an opportunity to profit from some excellent handbooks, coordination experimentation has been much assisted by the development of national centers and clearinghouses for children's services, by the emergence of a number of university centers and institutes, by an array of governmental and interest-group "Commissions" on service coordination, and by rather significant media attention to some of the "lighthouse" experimentation underway in various

urban communities. Increasing legitimation of the service coordination idea is to be found in the attention being gained steadily among state legislatures and Governors' Offices (e.g., California's Healthy Start initiative, Kentucky School Reform, Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century) (see First, Curcio, and Young, 1994).

Nevertheless, there is at present a deep sense of unease regarding children's services coordination, and perhaps an "at-a-crossroads" sense that some clear evidence of success in coordinated endeavors must soon be demonstrated. A termination of funding for "The Children's Initiative" (in the spring of 1994) by the Pew Charitable Trust was an eye-opener; and an accumulating set of project reports and evaluations has thus far painted a far-from-optimistic picture of coordination-achieved, let alone successfully improved outcomes for children (Cohen, 1994). Although the broad recognition is that it is still early-times for most projects, and that the reforms in institutions expected in service coordination are enormously difficult to accomplish, the stakes attached to both success and failure in children's services coordination appear nevertheless to be escalating, rather geometrically.

Thus, it is well advised for us to examine anew (at this watershed time) some basic assumptions and questions vis-a-vis knowledge dissemination and utilization in the service coordination arena. Specifically, it is time to ask whether insights to be gleaned to date from ongoing projects suggest

some new or altered interpretations of facilitation strategies in service coordination. In doing so, we draw heavily upon our study of a group of projects in the cities of Houston, Chicago, East Los Angeles, and Minneapolis--undertaken under the auspices of the National Center on Education in the Inner Cities. We also draw heavily upon a body of emerging theory and inquiry that has acquired the common label: "The New Institutionalism."

Background: The New Institutionalism

It is of special interest to note that there has been a resurgence of scholarly attention to the nature and structure of institutions--at the very moment that the proponents of children's services coordination are struggling to entice separate institutions into working more closely together. Just as the phrase "schools matter" became a popular counter to 1960's-era conclusions that in fact they do not, the notion that "institutions do matter" has now become a perspective of significance in the examination of public-sector organizations and their behaviors/outcomes (Lane, 1993). As noted above, this new theorizing has acquired a common label: "The New Institutionalism." It is not yet a tightly defined perspective, and its varied conceptual contributions (from the differing traditions of political science, organizational theory, sociology, and economics) are far from fully compatible (see DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

Beyond its value in re-establishing an interest in the social significance of institutions, the new perspective

offers some important-to-coordination insights. First, the new institutionalism suggests the worth of a returned focus upon basic organizational structures and upon fundamental organizational coherence, or "order." Reward, control, communications, and goal-setting structures are vital to be sure--but the order stemming from organizational histories, patterns of time-usage, norms, rituals and ceremonies, symbols, political relations, and career patterns are also key indicators of institutional significance (March and Olsen, 1984). Second, the new institutionalism places an emphasis upon an understanding of organizational persistence above change. While change is typically the center of attention in any "project," it is suggested by the new institutionalists that a worthy starting point is stability above direct "reform" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). And, third, the new institutionalism posits an all-encompassing, rather holistic notion of the relationship between organizations and their external environments--in place of the "boundary-spanning" that is characteristic of much inquiry (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991).

We note, with interest, that some significant portions of the services coordination literature do not appear to be fully consistent with the new institutionalism. Indeed, in her introduction to The Politics of Linking Schools and Social Services, Adler (1994: 11) observes that "people, not organizations, collaborate." "People from various organizations are the actual collaborators, not the

organizations. Organizations can constrain or enable interorganizational efforts, but collaboration is a person-to-person activity" (Adler, 1994: 10). For this reason, she continues, "interpersonal ties are critical to the success of interorganizational relationships" (Adler, 1994: 10).

In a similar vein, the authors of the handbook Together We Can (Melaville and Blank with Asayesh, 1993), suggest a five-stage process of collaboration-development that is heavily "people" oriented. The process begins when a small group of individuals "decides to act," and then involve other "right" people (e.g., persons with clout and commitment), plus "make a commitment to collaborate" (Melaville and Blank with Asayesh, 1993: 23). Additional steps involve some sharing of knowledge and resources, the development of a shared collaborative vision and goals, some strategic planning (including formalized interagency agreements), some staff training, and a steady broadening of the "scale" of collaboration. Recognizably, school staff members (particularly teachers) are likely to be asked to change their roles under collaboration. Accordingly, they must be helped to "see themselves" in different ways, "recognize" other actors in children's development, "be open" to revised interpretations of learning, and "rethink their own roles in relation to children's behavior" (Melaville and Blank with Asayesh, 1993: 72).

While we would agree that "people" must certainly do the work of building children's services collaboration, we would

argue that people cannot be separated from the "iron cages" of their separate employing organizations. To be sure, efforts to build a sense of partnership and engender a shared "vision" are vital, and efforts to get folks to "see themselves" in altered roles are essential. However, neither program implementation nor knowledge dissemination that focuses upon people-changing to the neglect of deep structures in the institutional context, is likely to progress very far toward the complex alterations of behavior that are envisioned in the children's services literature. In the pages to follow we attempt to illustrate this point by drawing upon two key insights from the new institutionalism, and by employing some of our findings from a bit of fieldwork in a few services-coordination settings.

The Institutional Side of Service Coordination

1. Protecting the Core Technology. The first insight reaches back to some of the earliest voices for the new institutionalism, as found in the work of Selznick (1949) and Meyer and Rowan (1977). The observation is that as environmental pressures build upon an organization (e.g., with a press to collaborate), the tendency within the organization is to protect its deepest "technical activities" from these pressures. Such a tactic is often pursued "through decoupling elements of structure from other activities and from each other, thus reducing their efficiency" (Zucker, 1987: 445). In short, it would not be unlikely for us to find that organizations pressed to

collaborate will tend to respond by becoming even more fragmented and more loosely coupled, not less.

There is some evidence for this, in the literature to date on children's services coordination, and in reports from ongoing fieldwork. In our own review (Crowson and Boyd, 1993), mention was made of evaluation-related concerns thus far that coordinated-services were having little impact on "the way schools work;" that the "soft-funding" nature of most experimentation has tended to leave services-coordination on the organizational periphery; and that autonomy-maintaining allocations of professional space, "powers," and prerogatives have been little breeched. Indeed, experimentation was not long underway before it became rather widely recognized that school-linked services for children seem to have a more productive future than the more "intrusive" notion of school-based services (Behrman, 1992).

Other reviews have added depth and substance to this fragmentation-maintained thesis. Mitchell and Scott (1994: 89) observe, for example, that "the single most potent threat to successful interagency collaboration lies in the historical division of client needs into distinctive 'problems' that are seen as amenable to treatment by the application of a given agency's staff energy and expertise." Core technologies are unlikely to be successfully blended, argue Mitchell and Scott (1994), which continue to define client needs in traditionally separate fashion as educational

problems, or health problems, or family-assistance problems--rather than blendedly as multi-issue "cases" of children and families with needs. Similarly, Koppich (1994) observes that organizational interests in maintaining fragmentation can tend to be deep-structure-endowed with wider feedback-type political systems--systems which find much to be gained in fighting all the harder for separate categorical services when under pressure to collaborate.

A pair of brief vignettes (drawn from site observations and interviews in connection with two ongoing projects) adds further to the central thesis. Be advised that full descriptions of the field sites and the field research methods are reported elsewhere (see Crowson and Boyd, 1994; also Smylie, Crowson, Chou, and Levin, 1994). Suffice it to note that school-based projects in the cities of Houston and Chicago have been under ongoing investigation, as well as a school-linked project in East Los Angeles.

> In one of the projects a major thust has been the employment of Family Advocates, residents of the community who are used by the project schools as "outreach" personnel. The Family Advocates are to link the schools with parents and families--bringing services to the needs that surface, engaging in parent-education, encouraging parent involvement, and bringing community leadership (e.g., clergy, other-services providers, community resources) together around the needs of families and children.
>
> As the work of the Advocates unfolded, it quickly became clear that the persons exercising these roles on behalf of the schools would be privvy to extremely personal and privileged information about neighborhood families and their children. Some of this information if known and unreported could be politically dangerous to school authorities, who could foresee "blow-ups." A "technology" of school administration has long proceeded on the assumption that information coming to the

attention of the school (e.g., child abuse) should be acted upon, but a "best strategy" politically is to do as little as possible to become knowledgeable about such family secrets.

Because the work of the Advocates changed the nature of the playing field, school authorities demanded that henceforth the Advocates must share any information with the school, uncovered in the course of their activities. The Advocates responded that much of this information is highly confidential; and parents will participate in the project only if assured confidentiality. School authorities insisted nevertheless that the "risk" in all of this is borne directly by the administration, and the administration therefore must have open access to all files.

Project observers have subsequently reported that the Family Advocates began collecting little additional information about families, and sharing less; while school administrators began efforts to "try to find out" what is now being held back. In sum, an effort to link schools and families through the work of Family Advocates succumbed rather early-on to some fragmenting- and decoupling-of-activity stressors in the political/ administrative environment of the institution (see, Smylie, Crowson, Chou, and Levin, 1994).

Another vignette illustrates the fragmentation-maintaining strength of categorical funding.

A second project under our observation depends heavily upon the willingness of parents to come to the school-site for an array of children-and-family services (e.g., health, counseling, parent-education). A family services center is located in portable-style facilities on the school grounds, next to the main building. The project and the school are located in an inner-city, Hispanic neighborhood that does not have a cultural tradition of parent involvement/parent activity in schooling. Indeed, the neighborhood tradition is to stop all parenting at the schoolhouse gates, leaving the children in the hands of the professional educators.

After a long and concerted campaign to welcome the neighborhood's parents into the school, and to make them feel welcomed, project administrators were excited and enormously encouraged to note parents beginning to enter the school with their children in the mornings--and beginning to join them in the cafeteria for the federally-funded free breakfast. Indeed, the practice quickly became so popular that the cafeteria began running out of food, some children started to receive

no breakfast while adults ate, and adults began taking table-space while children were left standing.

Alarmed by these sudden effects, school authorities decided to take action to restrict parental access to the cafeteria, insuring that only children would eat. Some thought was given to a search for additional funding, in order to continue parental breakfasting. However, fears of grant co-mingling, and of paying for the co-mingled "double-duty" of cafeteria staff, ruled against the idea. In sum, a fragmentation-minded focus upon the special "problem" of children needing breakfast turned out not to be very adaptable to the broader goal of family-servicing.

The key dilemma posed by a protection of the technology, under the threat of collaboration, is that unless collaboration can somehow "touch" the core technology of its cooperating institutions, it is unlikely to have the staying-power necessary to success. Mitchell and Scott (1994: 84) put it well, in observing:

> "Interdisciplinary cooperation, no matter how expert it might be, cannot solve systemic breakdowns. It is a short step from this observation to the realization that interagency collaboration efforts are doomed to failure if they are merely 'pasted-on' to an existing system."

2. Rediscovering Institutional Rules and Routines.

A second insight from the new institutionalism suggests, however, that it is primarily through the deeply embedded routines, rules, and "scripts" of organizations that collaborative ventures are most likely to bear a bit of fruit (Zucker, 1987). This thesis counters prevailing notions of how best to move toward collaboration--including (a) negotiating and adjudicating a balance between competing organizational interests; and/or (b) developing "constitution-like" definitions of new social-coordination

procedures; plus, (c) finding the common attitudinal ground of shared visions, goals, and values (see Gray, 1991; Melaville and Blank with Asayesh, 1993).

The "harder," rules-and-routines focus is consistent with the new institutional belief that: "Not norms and values but taken-for-granted scripts, rules, and classifications are the stuff of which institutions are made" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991: 15). The influence of Garfinkel (1967) is strong here, in suggesting that there may be much less intentionality and purposiveness in organizations than is often the belief, and much more taken-for-grantedness. Zucker (1987: 456) notes that a good bit of that which is most important in a taken-for-granted set of routines can be found in: (a) the formalization of work rules, promotion hierarchies, etc.; (b) the length of the histories of structures/tasks; and, (c) the degree of "embeddedness" of routines "in a network of structures/tasks." Again, put simply, the central notion is that the most deeply "institutionalized" and stable/persisting of organizational elements (hidden, "protected," scripted, taken-for-granted) may indeed be the top sources of some newly collaborative action.

Admittedly, clear and direct illustrations/examples of the importance of "scripting" to collaboration are not readily at hand in the extant literature. Nevertheless, there are a few interesting clues to this phenomenon in reports from some of the field studies. One element of

taken-for-grantedness, for example, that has bedeviled much experimentation, is illustrated well in a Chicago project that has been studied over time by a team led by Mark Smylie (see Nucci and Smylie, 1991; Smylie, Crowson, and Hare, 1992; Smylie, Crowson, and Chou, 1994; and Smylie, Crowson, Chou, and Levin, 1994).

This project has emphasized an "outreach" approach to its surrounding neighborhoods--employing the Family Advocates mentioned earlier and some health services personnel who have engaged in "community" as opposed to "school" nursing. Indeed, an early battle in the project pitted the health services folks (who saw themselves reaching out into the larger community as health activists) against the school authorities (who thought they'd be receiving traditionally in-school nurses). Over time, the press of a school administration increasingly uneasy over the "risk" of community activism began to force the work of the project "inside." Observed one of the Family Advocates, finally:

> "The project has been absorbed by the school. We are becoming more and more school personnel. We are extra bodies" (Smylie, Crowson, and Hare, 1992: 20).

The experience of the Chicago project is apparently not at all unique. In an historical examination of children's services efforts, Tyack (1992) noted the long-term tendency of such innovations to be effectively "pedagogized"--that is, to be drawn over time into an institutionalized personna of "classroom-lot" thinking, curricular-objectives orientations, an it's-time-for-math obeisance to the clock, and a teacher-

centered view of what's most important in the work of the organization (see also Johnson, et. al., 1980).

The Chicago project provides an example of educational/administrative scripting (e.g., reduce risk) and a taken-for-grantedness about service-provision (e.g., in-school health provision is what school nurses do). This example does not encourage optimism vis-a-vis the collaboration-building opportunities to be found in the deep structures of organizations. Nevertheless, interestingly, the same Chicago project also offers a few primitive and preliminary insights into a more hopeful (though taken-for-grantedness) route towards institutional change.

The project had been initiated in the fall of 1990 in four of Chicago's inner-city schools. Funding for five years came primarily from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation--with support for: (a) a "Family Ties" effort to reach out to parents and the community (using Family Advocates), (b) a "Partners in Health" attempt to facilitate access to community health services, and (c) a "School Enhancement" component assisting school staff development. A series of reports on the Chicago project has documented the project's enounters (similar to those experienced by most children's services experiments to date) with turf barriers, communications challenges, professional-training differences, incentives-systems problems, and administrative/political issues (see Smylie, Crowson, and Hare, 1992). However, by late 1993, an additional report (Smylie and Crowson, 1993) began to use the

same set of case-study data to ask whether (over the project's brief history) there indeed were at least a few small hints of collaboration underway.

In brief summary, Smylie and Crowson (1993) found some evidence by year four (in a project not noted for goal-attaining successes) that some of the "marginality" of the project and its "services" orientation was beginning to break down. Interestingly, some of the best evidence for direct change was not to be found in the "big" project efforts of family advocacy and community outreach so much as it was to be discovered in "small" efforts that tended to work towards outreach out of the ongoing "scripting" of the school (particularly its instructional activities). Smylie and Crowson (1993) write:

> "One of the most successful by far of the small pieces of project elements was an activity designed by one member of the university faculty to encourage a group of parents in one deep-poverty neighborhood to express themselves in writing. A group of willing-to-try-it parents was encouraged to work together toward the compilation of brief paragraphs, essays, poems, observations-on-life, family remembrances, etc. as deep-from-the-heart expressions of themselves and their environments. No 'instruction' (e.g., in spelling, grammar, etc.) was introduced that would constrain the creativity or threaten the self-confidence of the participants.
>
> A resultant 'publication' of the parental writings received wide attention throughout the project (e.g., around the schools, among university faculty, among the grade-school students and other parents) as an outstanding compendium of some (often poignant) observations on life-in-the-city by its supposedly least-well-educated inhabitants. The parents in the writing project gained confidence and a sense of togetherness to the extent that they went on to become a forceful leadership-group in demands for further outreach and community-services integration within the scope of the experiment. The children of

> the participating parents were very aware and very proud of their parents' accomplishments; and, perhaps even more importantly, the 'directors' of the project (university folks and school administrators) saw the parents in project schools with new awareness and new respect."

Such seemingly small efforts as the above would likely have no independent impact without the encompassing framework of a larger project philosophy of outreach and community services integration. Nevertheless, such examples as these do proceed from a key element of new institutional theorizing. Zucker (1987: 446) notes that it is likely for new actions which are embedded in already institutionalized ácts and structures to be able to successfully "'infect' other elements in a contagion of legitimacy." Interestingly, sources of "infection" can be many and varied, and often do not start "inside," as another observation by Smylie and Crowson (1993) illustrates:

> "As the experiment settled-in, it was 'discovered' by a number of prominent governmental (particularly state) officials, as well as by other 'outside' polities (e.g., other universities, the media). Project participants have observed that this 'discovery' by the outside seemed to play an important confirming-its-value role for the project--and only then did folks begin to take pointed pride in and especially celebrate the project's community-services work (e.g., the youth programs, the parents' writing experience, the activities of the Advocates). Interestingly, experiments like Chicago's are often criticized for providing more 'PR' than substance; less well recognized is the insight that the celebratory value of good 'PR' can help produce a project-participant readiness for substance."

The New Institutionalism and Dissemination/Utilization

What are the implications of an "institutional" perspective for the dissemination and utilization of

knowledge in children's services coordination? We would suggest three.

1. On the "Scripting" of Collaboration. It has been recognized that well-crafted technical assistance may be essential to successful collaboration. Understandably, the literature notes that technical assistance providers should be thoroughly grounded in such skills as "assisting groups to think strategically," helping groups develop "facilitation skills," "getting disagreements among group members on the table," "creating a common vision," helping "members of the collaborative trust and respect each other," etc. (see Scott with Perlowski, 1994: 9-14). It is additionally well understood that the above elements of a "process knowledge" must be bolstered by a thorough knowledge of "substance"--of the workings of the collaborating human service systems and of the "technical issues" (e.g., confidentiality, financing) that are encountered in collaboration (Scott with Perlowski, 1994: 8).

Nevertheless, one possible difficulty with the traditional technical assistance approach to knowledge dissemination/utilization is that it essentially represents a scripting of collaboration from the outside, not the inside. Indeed, as new groups develop and attempt to move with assistance toward collaboration, the resulting addition to organizational uncertainty can paradoxically increase rather than lessen protections of the technical core (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Institutions, not very malleable, can become

even less malleable under conditions of added environmental uncertainty (Thompson, 1967).

Few efforts to date, to our knowledge, have attempted to assist the development of services collaboration "from within," by moving carefully from institutionalized "scripts" that are already in place. Mitchell and Scott (1994), for example, note the importance for classroom teachers of the twin scripting processes of "typification" and "thematization." Typification gives a taken-for-grantedness (a conceptual meaning) to countless details of lesson planning, pupil testing, grouping, learning problems, attendance forms, report cards, etc. Thematization links these many elements of the job into "a meaningful story of action, responsibility and purpose" (Mitchell and Scott, 1994: 81). Beyond education, each of the other service professions similarly has its own typifiers and themes--which are essential parts of the deeply-structured "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977) of their employing organizations.

From this perspective, a 'from-within" program of technical assistance might be best advised to pursue ethnography-of-practice analyses of separate institutional scripts and perhaps a Mintzbergian (1973) accounting of work habits and time allocations--as important first steps in collaboration-development. We would suggest that a program of effective technical assistance might be best advised to start with the (albeit fragmented) world of the taken-for-granted in service delivery, moving outward from there toward

newly collaborative scripts, in place of the group-facilitating and the "thinking strategically" that is now common.

One important element of the services-collaboration movement that has just this flavor is the effort to nurture collaboration from-within by changing the nature of professional training. The hope is that preparation programs for interprofessional collaborative practice can carry their own technical assistance (ready-made, by the very virtue of employment) deeply into the institutional core of service organizations. Unfortunately, the various university specialties do not themselves collaborate easily; and the discovery is that deep-structure changes are necessary here as well--including such awe-inspiring suggestions as: "This integrative process requires that the university reconceptualize the knowledge base of each profession" (Knapp, et. al., 1994: 139).

2. On "Systems" and "Infections." Generally, service integration projects, alliances, or collaboratives fall into one of two categories: (1) projects that are fairly comprehensive and involve numerous state, county and local agencies, and may also include a number of private agencies, foundations, universities and/or colleges. These projects are then targeted to serve a population throughout a given state or municipality. (2) Projects that are more modest, for example, an alliance that is focused upon an individual school, involving only a few agencies and outside interests.

These less ambitious projects tend to be site-specific and serve a narrowly targeted population of students and their families (Crowson and Boyd, 1994).

One of the many paradoxes in children's services coordination is the observation that the comprehensive involvement of a multitude of agencies across a variety of localities and levels has an attractive ring of efficiency and systemic change to it, while the more modest projects may more readily attain limited goals but with little basic alteration of the overarching service-delivery "system." The involvement of numerous agencies can make the actual process of collaboration quite cumbersome, inflexible and hierarchical; but modest projects, less hierarchical and more flexible, can tend to remain on the periphery of deeply-structured change.

The dilemmas (paradoxes) of scale, hierarchy, deep-structure change, and goal-attainment are also played out in strategizing for the dissemination and utilization of knowledge. On the one hand, in an agenda and some theorizing paralleling that of "systemic school reform" (Smith and O'Day, 1991), the coordinated services movement requires a newly "institutionalized" structure that goes far beyond individual "projects" in local communities. New institutional theorizing suggests that environmental forces most fully effect change through organizational sector or "field" influences (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). That is, coordinated children's services at the local level are most

likely to be sustained if an institutional "field" develops that includes state-level coordination, interprofessional university training, some federal attention to services coordination, and an overall thrust nationally (politically and ideologically) towards the service-coordination concept (see, Hagen and Tibbitts, 1994).

On the other hand, the infectious "contagion of legitimacy" (Zucker, 1987) for service coordination that is posited above cannot be sustained if there fails to be a strong bottom-up acceptance of, and evidence of success in, the direct implementation of coordinated services. Increasingly, the further discovery is that a successful, bottom-up infection includes a high degree of parent and community involvement (Mawhinney, 1994; Smrekar, 1994). The imperative, observes Smrekar (1994: 29) is that "formerly fuzzy boundaries between the private lives of families and the public responsibilities of schools are redrawn." Indeed, Smrekar (1994: 29-30) continues: "...the roles, rules, and rituals which formerly defined the universe of expectations and experiences for families in their interactions with schools shift in a school culture of cooperation, information exchange and intervention."

Most importantly, Smrekar (1994) also observes, from research in Kentucky, that the spread of the integrated services "infection" (toward new expectations, roles, and rituals) breaks down when it fails to permeate through to classroom teachers--when "coordinators" are left to establish

relationships with families, while work roles for teachers are left essentially unchanged. In short, while success at the locality may require a change in the larger "field" of service delivery, the "field" simultaneously seems to require the organization-penetrating redefinition, locally, of the school-community ecology.

3. On Coordinated-Services "Transactions." An insight from the economics-of-organization side of the new institutionalism is instructive. This insight is the notion of "transaction costs." The idea is that by joining organizations, and by accepting the authority of the organization, individuals are saving themselves the "costs" of having to transact their own employment contracts (see Moe, 1984). That is, they reap some important "cost-savings" by depending upon an organizational structure and not themselves to admit clients, distribute resources, allocate space, etc. As autonomous as classroom teachers might wish to be, for example, few would want to incur the "costs" of having to enroll and "process" their own pupils, obtain their own textbooks and teaching resources, find and furnish their own classrooms, provide for their own and their students' personal safety, and negotiate their own instructional calendars/schedules.

One of the central difficulties in encouraging a coordination of services is that (at least in the short run) such efforts increase transaction costs. Time must be spent acquiring an awareness of how other-services operate,

becoming acquainted with professionals from fields not-your-own, finding common ground between differing organizational rules and regulations, establishing new mechanisms for management and communication, and smoothing the inevitable conflicts that arise. A sense of the "cost" in all of this is illustrated well in a string of quotations from participants in a Minneapolis project, reported upon by Crowson and Boyd (1994: 30-31):

> "Getting the partnership off the ground was harder than expected. There were communication barriers along with different work styles, values, and objectives. They don't always match between the two groups. Even the two calendars are so different."
>
> "We've had a hard time setting meetings. The partnership involves a lot of busy people. Currently, we don't have regular meetings."
>
> "Teachers are overwhelmed. Meetings are back to back with classes, and teachers often come in 'frazzled,' not ready to switch gears."
>
> "Teachers are not used to running meetings efficiently, keeping on task."

Furthermore, one of the most efficient mechanisms for limiting "costs," an administrative hierarchy, finds itself to be much less efficient under coordination. More than one hierarchy is usually involved; and it isn't at all clear in most experimentation to date just how hierarchy can be adapted effectively to coordination. Indeed, it has not been uncommon thus far for parallel rather than integrated managerial systems to develop, as illustrated in the comment by a school principal in the Chicago project studied by Smylie, Crowson, and Hare (1992: 23):

> "I really feel like I'm running two schools. I've

> got the entire school to run and then this project over here on the side that I'm trying to move... I'm taking my time from what I could be doing in the school to do it."

By no means have the proponents of service-coordination been unaware of the "streamlining" that will be needed to reduce such costs. Indeed in Together We Can, Melaville and Blank with Asayesh (1993: 29) urge interagency commissions at the state level "to coordinate policies and regulations," and otherwise urge an array of state incentives, training, "networking," etc. initiatives that can provide hierarchical support to local collaboration. In advising local collaborators, the authors offer cost-reducing suggestions to negotiate and formalize interagency agreements, to design common intake and assessment forms, to set up a partnered management information system, and to hammer out some common client-eligibility rules (Melaville and Blank with Asayesh, 1993: 59-62). Although cost-increasing in the short run, such agreements and forms-consolidations can be significantly cost-reducing in the longer run.

Nevertheless, beyond a sense of "streamlining" and an interest in the reduced fragmentation of services for children, there has been remarkably little attention to date (in discussions of knowledge dissemination and utilization) to transactions and their consequences. To the extent that transactions are considered, much of the knowledge base has thus far focused upon agency professionals rather than other systems and actors--particularly the difficulties in overcoming a reluctance of professionals to change work roles

and habits (e.g., employing staff training, building trust, handling conflicts). Because many of the "costs" of managing their own clients are removed for professionals (protecting their autonomy), the added-cost burdens in changing their behaviors toward collaboration are substantial.

One alternative strategy would be to reduce a bit of the "people" focus (as discussed earlier in this paper), concentrating instead upon a knowledge base in the formation of shared systems of rules and regulations between cooperating institutions--thereby hopefully saving some of the "costs" of professionals striving to maintain their autonomy while simultaneously collaborating. Cibulka (forthcoming) places a rationale behind such an alternative, in observing:

> "A ...question is whether coordinated services will contribute to a fundamental transformation of the institution of schooling away from the old ideal of structural and professional autonomy, helping to reshape education and schools into more open and multilevel forms of organization, so that schools are linked to and depend upon a variety of other social and human services." (p. 25)

A second strategy would be to focus much more directly, than has yet been the case, upon one central "cost" issue in services-coordination--that which Smrekar (forthcoming) labels the "uneasy alliance" of parents with school and other-services professionals. Conceivably, a much closer alliance (a linking of schools, families, and communities) can relieve some of the tensions between laypersons and professionals and some of the "costs" of these tensions--e.g., a protecting and buffering of professionals,

conflicting interpretations of the service "needs" of children, a distrust of motives by "both parties," and the non-communication of jargon-filled interactions (see Capper, 1994). Again, Cibulka (forthcoming) notes that: "While the lay-professional tension is a fundamental dimension of the task of linking schools, families, and communities, it has often been ignored in the recent discussions about coordinated services for children" (p. 13).

It should be noted that thus far in children's services coordination where there has been a "least-costly" approach, it has tended to take the form of a "referrals" relationship between the schools and other agencies. School professionals refer children and families to other "cooperating" institutions in the community--thereby leaving intact and largely undisturbed the lifeways of each category of institution. We would note that without a careful attention to transaction issues in the more deeply integrative efforts toward service-coordination, such "least-costly" strategies are likely to prevail.

Conclusion

It should not be just a matter of coincidence for us to find that as interest has grown in the promotion of service-coordination, interest has been renewed simultaneously in the deep-structure study of public-sector institutions. Institutions do matter. That this may be largely a coincidence, however, is attested to in the failure to date for the two literatures to merge--despite the significance of

a firm knowledge of organizations if there is to be success in collaboration, and despite the opportunities to learn much more about organizations if they are studied while attempting to collaborate. Of course, it is even more curious to note (with Herrington, 1994: 302) that relatively little has appeared to date as well in the educational administration literature on managerial and leadership issues in coordinated children's services.

It has been the purpose of this paper to begin an examination of the implications that a developing literature on institutions-rediscovered ("the new institutionalism") has for the service-coordination movement. We selected just a couple of conceptual insights from the new institutionalism, balanced these concepts against the services coordination literature and some of our own fieldwork, and attempted to draw some implications for a dissemination of knowledge about the coordination of children's services. We do suggest that some of the assumptions and practices that are now offered as "guidelines" for service coordination may not be fully congruent with the new understandings of public-sector institutions.

A first construct that we explored was the observation that as environmental pressures build upon organizations, the tendency is to protect the deepest of the "technical-core" activities. Yet it is fundamentally the technical core (e.g., how differing professionals interact with one another and with their clients, how the "problems" of clients are

conceptualized, and how professional training is reflected in service delivery) that is at the heart of the coordinated services idea. If "co-opting," for example, is accepted as a form of protection, it has not been at all unusual for projects to date to discover (as did Herrington, 1994: 312) the following phemononen: "It is clear from the interviews with the principals that the other agencies' nonschool employees were expected to conform to the norms of the school's culture" (see also, Smylie, Crowson, Chou, and Levin, 1994).

A second construct suggests that the deepest of a "taken-for-grantedness" in organizations (e.g., scripts, classifications, rules) may paradoxically be a profitable but little-explored route towards institutional change. While guidelines for service coordination have much to say about the people-altering that is needed (e.g., visioning, building trust, finding common ground), there has been only minimal attention to the collaboration-building potential of "deep" or "hidden" structures. An example of such potential is found in the work of Mitchell and Scott (1994: 89), who note that "shared language is critical to collaborative success" and observe further that agency redefinitions of client "problems" (away from the specializations of disease problems separate from "family welfare" problems or "learning" problems) represents one small route towards some possibly systemic change. Such small steps as redefining the "scripts" that surround children's "problems," furthermore,

can become "infections" among other systemic elements in a drive toward collaboration.

Beyond these institutional "constructs" and their implications, we have attempted to suggest in this paper that efforts to encourage a dissemination/utilization of knowledge in services coordination should be broadened considerably toward much more thorough analyses of collaborating organizations and their structures. We offered as examples the value of focusing upon the in-place "scripts" of organizations and the possibility of "infectious" behavior (as noted directly above); and we developed the importance of paying close attention to the "costs" of the redesigned "transactions" that are contemplated in service-coordination experimentation.

To close, perhaps a metaphor can help clarify the key point--that a facilitation of the knowledge base in this complex arena of re-organization requires "deeper" knowledge. The facilitation of knowledge utilization is much like being a music enthusiast or critic. One can be very knowledgeable about what makes a given musical performance great, as opposed to merely entertaining, or even mediocre. A music critic can know the histories of each and every performer, their individual strengths and weaknesses, and how these musicians should perform on any given day. Additionally, the enthusiast knows the works to be performed, how a specific piece should sound, and what musically should happen within the performance. However, the enthusiast is neither able to

actually perform himself, nor is he capable of instructing others on how to make music. The enthusiast or critic is incapable of actually performing all the technical, physical and intellectual decisions that ultimately make music happen.

It is in the dissemination and implementation phase of coordinated, school-linked services, that "music should happen." Delivery of the right kind of technical assistance during the dissemination and implementation phase can provide the critical glue that not only binds coordinated, school-linked service projects together, but yields the ultimate goal of the participating organizations and personnel, that of better long-term outcomes for children. This paper's intent has been to help move the overall discussion regarding coordinated, school-linked services from that of "critic" to that of "performance."

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